

Message Text

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17

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8934

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

S E C R E T LISBON 4737

E.O. 11652: XGDS-DECLAS 1/1/85

TAGS: PINT PINS PO

SUBJ: COUP PLOT FOILED IN PORTUGAL

SUMMARY: PLAN TO REPLACE PRIME MINISTER CAETANO WITH FORMER OVERSEAS MINISTER ADRIANO MOREIRA OR GENERAL LAULZA DE ARRIAGA IN NEW ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE REGIME PROPPED UP BY MILITARY ELEMENTS HAS UNRAVELED. SEVERAL PROMINENT RIGHTWING FIGURES NOW DISCREDITED AND SOME REPORTEDLY UNDER POLICE SURVEILLANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS THAT RIGHTWING MILITARY AND POLITICAL FIGURES HAVE ATTEMPTED A COUP AGAINST PRIME MINISTER CAETANO BECAUSE OF THEIR BELIEF THAT HE WAS MOVING TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN TERRITORIES. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SEPARATE, USUALLY WELL-INFORMED SOURCES, RIGHTWING FIGURES HELD SERIES OF MEETINGS OVER CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AND DECIDED TO MOVE TO OBLIGE PRESIDENT TO

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DISMISS CAETANO AND REPLACE HIM WITH ADRIANO MOREIRA

(OR POSSIBLY KAULZA DE ARRIAGA). MOREIRA, FORMER MINISTER OF OVERSEAS, IS BITTER PERSONAL ENEMY OF CAETANO AND IN RECENT YEARS HAS ASSOCIATED INCREASINGLY WITH FAR RIGHTWING ELEMENTS.

2. WHILE WE ARE NOT PRIVY TO DETAILS OF PLOT, SOURCES AGREE THAT MAJOR FIGURES WERE GENERAL KAULZA ARRIAGA, UNTIL RECENTLY COMMANDER IN CHIEF IN MOZAMBIQUE AND NOW IN RELATIVELY MINOR JOB AS HEAD OF NUCLEAR ENERGY BOARD; GENERAL LUZ CUNHA, CURRENTLY COMMANDER IN CHIEF IN ANGOLA; FRANCO NOGUEIRA, FOREIGN MINISTER, ADRIANO MOREIRA, AND GENERAL SILVINO SILVERIO MARQUES, PROFESSOR AT NAVAL WAR COLLEGE AND MEMBER OF OVERSEAS COUNCIL AND FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL OF ANGOLA. GENERAL ANTONIO SPINOLA, FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL AND COMMANDED IN CHIEF IN PORTUGUESE GUINEA, REPORTEDLY DECLINED REQUEST OF KAULZA TO PARTICIPATE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF COUP (ONE SOURCE SAYS SPINOLA TOLD KAULZA THAT SPINOLA FAVORED INDEPENDENCE OR COMMONWEALTH-STYLE ARRANGEMENT FOR PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN TERRITORIES). SPINOLA AND GENERAL COSTA GOMES, ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF, ARE SAID TO HAVE FOILED PLAN BYREPORTING IT TO CAETANO AND DRUMMING UP OPPOSITION WITHIN MILITARY.

3. GENERAL LUZ CUNHA, WHO WAS IN LISBON DURING CHRISTMAS PERIOD, REPORTEDLY RETURNED TO ANGOLA TO RESUME COMMAND. GENERAL KAULZA DE ARRIAGA IS REPORTEDLY IN LISBON; SOME SOURCES SAY HE IS UNDER POLICE SURVEILLANCE. ONE SOURCE REPORTS THAT A COLONEL AND A MAJOR WHO ACTED AS GO-BETWEENS FOR KAULZA/MOREIRA GROUP, LISBON POLICE FORCE, AND PARATROOP UNIT STATIONED AT TANCOS AIR BASE, HAVE BEEN SENT TO MADEIRA AND AZORES, RESPECTIVELY. SAME SOURCE SUGGESTS CAETANO GOVERNMENT MAY NOT BE OUT OF WOODS YET.

4. COMMENT: WHILE DETAILS OF EVENTS REPORTED ABOVE ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE TO US, SOURCES OF INFORMATION ARE SUFFICIENTLY RELIABLE AND DISCRETE TO CONVINCE
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US THAT SOMETHING ALONG LINES OF FOREGOING HAS INDEED TRANSPIRED. IF CAETANO WEATHERS THE STORM, AS APPEARS HIGHLY PROBABLE, HE WILL EMERGE IN VERY STRONG POSITION VIS-A-VIS OTHER POLITICAL FORCES HERE; WE MAY THEN BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER, AS RIGHTWING FEARS, HIS "AUTONOMY" POLICY IS AIMED AT EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE FOR PORTUGUESE GUINEA, MOZAMBIQUE, AND ANGOLA. AT SAME TIME, INFLUENCE

OF GENERALS COSTA GOMES AND SPINOLA (WHO IS
REPORTEDLY SLATED FOR RECENTLY CREATED AND POWER-
FUL JOB OF VICE-CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES)
SHOULD INCREASE DRAMATICALLY.
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